



# GUARDIAN OF PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

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## Preparedness and Planning

### Infectious Disease and National Security: Strategic Information Needs

Collection and analysis of information about the worldwide incidence of infectious disease is imperative for the United States to understand and respond to disease threats. [This study](#), conducted from July through October 2005, examines infectious disease within the context of national security and assesses the need for and adequacy of information that will enable U.S. policymakers to prevent and respond to such threats. At the center of this research is a review of the link between infectious disease and national security, as well as interviews with policymakers and other stakeholders to assess their information needs.

### BioSense Website

[BioSense](#) is a national program intended to improve the nation's capabilities for conducting near real-time biosurveillance, enabling health situational awareness through access to existing data from healthcare organizations across the country. The primary objective is to expedite event recognition and response coordination among federal, state, and local public health and healthcare organizations by providing each level of public health access to the same data, at the same time. In other words, if a bioterrorism event or a disease outbreak occurs, every level of public health will be able to see healthcare data from their community in near real-time. The new BioSense internet site is live.

### A Review of Current State-Level Adverse Medical Event Reporting Practices

A 2000 [study](#) revealed that preventable adverse medical events resulting from human error pose a significant threat to patient safety and cost the healthcare industry millions of dollars. In 2004, the RAND Corporation conducted phone surveys of the agencies and departments responsible for hospital licensing and regulation in each of the 50 states. Although we observed considerable variation across states in both the administrative procedures and the substantive aspects of the adverse medical event reporting systems we examined, the most striking result was the extent to which these systems had become more similar since the 2000 study.

### National Preparedness Month – September 2006

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that more than 1,150 national, regional, state and local organizations have joined the department to take part

**National  
Preparedness  
Month** Get a Kit, Make a Plan,  
Be Informed and  
Get Involved

## News

### PandemicFlu.gov in Spanish

The Spanish language version of the popular PandemicFlu.gov website is now available. Visit the new site at: [www.pandemicflu.gov/espanol/](http://www.pandemicflu.gov/espanol/)

### Deaf and Hard of Hearing Resources

- [Deaf and Hard of Hearing Interpreter Directory 2006](#)
- [E-Michigan Deaf and Hard of Hearing People](#)
- Pocket-size Guides: "Communication Guide for Law Enforcement" and "Communication Guide for Medical Personnel". Contact (877) 499-6232 for more information.

### Avian Influenza Tests Complete On Michigan Mute Swans

The U.S. Department of Agriculture [confirm](#) that an H5N1 avian influenza virus detected in samples collected earlier this month from two Michigan wild mute swans is a low pathogenic subtype and no threat to human health.

## Events

### National Public Health Information Coalition (NPHIC) Conference

The 2006 annual [NPHIC conference](#) will be held in Portland, Oregon on October 22-25. Conference organizers request participant [registration](#) by September 26. Topics covered at the conference will include: Preparing for Pandemic Influenza, Identifying and Working with Special Populations, Effective Use of News Media in Health Communications, Role of Public Relations in Communications and Organizational Management, and "Hot Button" Topics of Current Interest to NPHIC Members.

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in [National Preparedness Month](#). This nationwide effort encourages Americans to prepare for emergencies of all kinds in their homes, businesses, schools and communities. This year, the department is putting a particular focus on family emergency preparedness, reminding individuals to make themselves and their loved ones better prepared.

### **A Computer Game for Real-Life Crises**

Game developer BreakAway Games Ltd. released the final version of [Incident Commander](#) free of charge to municipal emergency departments as part of an agreement with the Justice Department, which invested \$350,000 in game development. You can use the following link to obtain a free copy of the game:

## **Exercises**

### **Palisades Nuclear Power Plant Exercise**

On September 6, the [Palisades Nuclear Power Plant](#) conducted a drill of the Radiation Emergency Plan. The State Emergency Operations Center was fully activated. The Emergency Operations Centers in Van Buren, Berrien, and Allegan Counties were also fully activated. The full-scale exercise of the Palisades plan, which will be evaluated by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, will be held on September 19.

## **Pandemic**

### **The State of Michigan Pandemic Influenza Plan Addresses Crucial Planning Issues**

The Michigan Department of Community Health released the Pandemic Annex to the All Hazards Plan (Plan) in March of 2006. [Version 2.3](#) of the Plan can be accessed online. The Plan is split into three distinct modules: pre-pandemic, pandemic, and post-pandemic. Each module has different sections that detail the lead agency and what tasks they will perform.

The overarching goal for the Plan is to prepare for a novel influenza virus and or pandemic influenza. As part of the overarching goal, there are five specific targets that address each section of the plan:

- To outline the responsible agents for command and management
- Early detection of the novel strain and rapid diagnosis of cases
- To prevent, mitigate, and contain any novel infection if present in Michigan
- Ensure rapid and appropriate treatment of patients
- Ensure the ability to return rapidly to pre-pandemic conditions

### **Policy Review – State Plans for Containment of Pandemic Influenza**

The Research Triangle Institute International conducted a review of forty-nine states' pandemic influenza plans. [This review](#) assesses differences and similarities for vaccination, early epidemic surveillance and detection, and intra-epidemic plans for containment of pandemic influenza. Appendix 2 of the review contains a side-by-side comparison of the states' plans.

## **Communications**

### **Risk Communication Message Mapping**

Message mapping is a science-based risk communication tool that enables members of the responder and environmental protection communities to quickly and concisely deliver the most pertinent information about an emer-

gency. The Environmental Protection Agency is currently assisting responders and other stakeholders in developing [message maps](#) for terrorist threats and other disasters.

### **Sign Language Services of Michigan**

Founded in 1996, the [Sign Language Services of Michigan](#) has rapidly grown to provide important emergency services. Their nationally certified interpreters are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and have received special training for signing in disaster situations. Sign Language Services of Michigan provide technical consultation about the assistive devices needed to communicate with deaf and hard of hearing people in shelters and evacuation centers. If you need information or training on meeting the unique needs of the deaf community, please call (586) 778-4188.

## **Surveillance**

### **Avian Influenza Tests Complete On Michigan Mute Swans**

On August 28, the U.S. Department of Agriculture [announced](#) final test results, which confirm that an H5N1 avian influenza virus detected in samples collected earlier this month from two Michigan wild mute swans is a low pathogenic subtype. This strain has been detected several times in wild birds in North America and poses no threat to human health.



### **Electronic Capture of Human/Animal Disease Reports**

A [2005 survey](#) of Michigan veterinarians showed that a simultaneous monitoring of human and animal disease surveillance systems is critical to protect health in both populations. Developing systems that link human and animal disease reporting systems can help identify and facilitate a response to known and emerging zoonotic

diseases. The [Michigan Disease Surveillance System](#) (MDSS) used by the Michigan Department of Community Health allows simultaneous electronic capture and assessment of human and animal disease reports.

### **DOI, USDA, and Alaska Test More Than 13,000 Wild Migratory Birds**

The Departments of Agriculture and Interior and the State of Alaska [announced](#) that they have tested more than 13,000 wild migratory birds for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 in Alaska. No HPAI H5N1 – a virus that has killed wild birds, commercial poultry and more than 140 people in Asia, Europe and Africa – has been detected in any of the Alaska samples. President Bush allocated \$29 million in his fiscal year 2006 avian influenza supplemental funding package for implementation of the wild bird surveillance and early detection plan, which is a key part of the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza.

### **Influenza Virus Sequence Data Publicly Accessible**

Scientists at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have released [genetic blueprints](#) for over 650 genes of influenza viruses into a database accessible to researchers worldwide. The action marks the beginning of collaboration between the CDC and the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) that will allow for greater access to data on a variety of influenza virus samples obtained from patients in the United States, including avian influenza H5N1 if it should arrive here.

### **CDC Announces the Opening of the 2006-2007 Flu Gallery**

Are you looking for educational materials about influenza and the flu vaccine? CDC's [Flu Gallery](#) contains educational materials for use during the upcoming influenza immunization season. These materials reflect CDC's vaccination recommendations and highlight the benefits of influenza vaccination. The Gallery contains print materials such as flyers, posters, and brochures, in color and black and white, English and Spanish. Many of the materials can be reproduced on an office printer. You can also have the materials printed by a professional (offset) printer. We encourage you to visit the online gallery often because the CDC will upload new materials that address expanded audiences, new recommendations, or "late season" promotion materials.

### **A Future H5N1 Treatment?**

Studies from the Spanish influenza era reported that transfusion of influenza-convalescent human blood products reduced mortality in patients with influenza complicated by pneumonia. Treatments for H5N1 influenza are unsatisfactory, and convalescent human plasma containing H5N1 antibodies could be an effective therapy during outbreaks and pandemics. [This study](#) suggests that patients with Spanish influenza pneumonia who received transfusion with influenza-convalescent human blood products may have experienced a clinically important reduction in the risk for death and improvements in clinical signs and symptoms.

## **Hospital Preparedness**

### **MEDDRUN/CHEMPACK Update**

The Michigan Emergency Drug Delivery and Resource Utilization Network (MEDDRUN) consist of standardized caches of medications and supplies strategically located throughout the State of Michigan. MEDDRUN is intended to rapidly deliver these medications and supplies to hospitals and other sites. These caches are pre-deployed at geographically diverse agencies based primarily with Michigan's rotary air, and selected ground, emergency medical services (EMS) agencies to minimize deployment time during an event.

MEDDRUN is not intended to eliminate the need for local hospitals and healthcare systems to prepare for emergencies and to stockpile certain minimum medications and supplies. Nor is MEDDRUN intended to supplant federal and state assets that may be mobilized to sustain long-term operations in a major Mass Casualty Incident (MCI). The MEDDRUN program is a state resource intended to bridge the gap between the onset of an event and the arrival of additional resources. The MEDDRUN caches are referred to as MedPacks, which contain pharmaceuticals, critical medical supplies and personal protective equipment.

CHEMPACK is a federal resource that provides the State of Michigan a supplemental source, of nerve agent antidotes to be utilized in a large-scale event. The CHEMPACK caches contain nerve agent antidotes and are also pre-deployed at sites across the state.





The Office of Public Health Preparedness recently developed a MEDDRUN/CHEMPACK brochure, first responder card and posters. These items were sent out to each hospital Emergency Department Manager, Local Health Department Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, Local Health Department Health Officer, Regional Hospital Bioterrorism Coordinator, Regional Medical Director, District Emergency Manager, Medical Control Authorities, EMS Education Programs and EMS Instructor Coordinators throughout the state of Michigan.

It is important for all to have knowledge of the resource and mechanisms for deployment. If you would like to receive additional copies of the above items you may contact Renee Ferguson via email [fergusonre@michigan.gov](mailto:fergusonre@michigan.gov) or by telephone at (517) 335-9477.

### **Michigan Syndromic Surveillance System**

The Michigan Department of Community Health Bureau of Epidemiology and Office of Public Health Preparedness have been working extremely hard to expand the Syndromic Surveillance System.

#### **Site Requirements:**

1. Ability to send data across the Internet
  - Preferred method: HL-7 format secured via a Virtual Private Network (VPN)
  - Alternative: Formatted flat file sent periodically via Secure FTP (or other secure method)
2. The following data elements are electronically sent to the system (de-identified)
  - Patient birth date, gender, home zip code
  - Visit date and time
  - Chief complaint
3. Contact information for:
  - Project leader
  - Interface person (message contents)
  - Network engineer
  - One person could fill multiple roles
4. Signed Data Use Agreement

The system investigates and identifies mechanisms to assist in the prompt and uniform identification and reporting of patient illnesses in near real time, which may suggest activity related to a specific disease or event. The system tracks chief complaints of patients presenting to emergency departments and categorizes them into one of the following: gastrointestinal, constitutional, respiratory, rash, hemorrhagic, botulinic, neurological, and other fields. State and Regional Epidemiologists monitor the information by running detection algorithms every hour as needed and would receive email alerts when deviations are found. Should an alert warrant further investigation, contact with the local health department would be initiated. State and Regional Epidemiologists have web access to chart and map collected data.

Currently there are 55 facilities enrolled in the system with over 4500 Emergency Department registrations transferred each day.

If healthcare facilities would like to participate in the Syndromic Surveillance System contact Amber Kennon at [kennona@michigan.gov](mailto:kennona@michigan.gov) or 517-335-9572 for more information.

## AHRQ Releases Mass Prophylaxis Information

Over the past 5 years, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has produced four projects to provide tools that local planners can use to prepare their communities for mass prophylaxis. Most recently, they have re-released [Mass Prophylaxis: Building Blocks for Community Preparedness](#). This document examines the health care system's ability to administer mass prophylaxis and explains elements typically found within local mass prophylaxis plans. The goal of this information is to give local communities the information and capability to respond to public health emergencies in real time.

## Training & Education

Date/Time	Event Description	Location
Sep. 11-15, 2006	<b><u>Hospital Emergency Response Training (HERT) for Mass Casualty Incidents (MCI) Train-the-Trainer Course</u></b> This course is designed to provide guidance to hospitals, EMS, health care facility personnel and others who may become involved in a mass casualty incident as a result of a hazardous materials incident or weapons of mass destruction event. For questions call Mr. Ron Freeman at (323) 757-0716, (323) 823-0856, or email Mr. Freeman at <a href="mailto:hertii@earthlink.net">hertii@earthlink.net</a> .	Noble Training Center 490 Care Drive Ft. McClellan, AL (256) 240-7500
Sep. 19-20, 2006	<b><u>Pandemic Influenza Workshop</u></b> The Institute of Medicine's Forum on Microbial Threats will host a public workshop on "Ethical and Legal Considerations in Mitigating Pandemic Disease."	Washington, D.C.
Sep. 27, 2006 2:00pm-3:00pm	<b>Live Response: Suicide (Homicide) Bombers</b> Exactly when a suicide bombing will take place on American soil is unknown. Intelligence and surveillance are vital for police to safely apprehend suicide bombers and prevent detonation. No suicide bomber profile exists; however, there is a behavioral profile that may be used to assist police and other emergency responders in recognizing them. We will look at the advantages of suicide bombers, pre-incident indicators, and suicide bombing incident response.	OPHP Large Training Room (517) 335-8150
Sep. 29, 2006 2:00pm-3:00pm	<b>Pandemic Flu Preparedness: What Every Community Should Know</b> This program will examine the case of California's Santa Clara County, where the community is preparing for a pandemic that will challenge their public health system and affect every aspect of their daily life.	OPHP Large Training Room (517) 335-8150
Oct. 22-25, 2006	<b><u>NPHIC Conference</u></b> This conference will cover: preparing for a pandemic influenza, identifying and working with special populations, effective use of news media in health communications, the role of public relations in communications and organizational management, and "hot button" topics of current interest.	Portland, OR
Nov. 3-5, 2006	<b><u>Clinical Vaccinology Course</u></b> This course will focus on new developments and concerns related to use of vaccines in pediatric, adolescent, and adult populations. Information regarding the preliminary program, registration, and hotel accommodations is available online. For more information, e-mail <a href="mailto:idcourse@nfid.org">idcourse@nfid.org</a> or telephone (301) 656-0003, ext. 19.	Crowne Plaza Atlanta-Buckhead Atlanta, GA

## Other News

### Medical Reserve Corps Now In All 50 States

The Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), a national network of locally based medical, public health, and other volunteers who help strengthen the public health system of their communities, has reached a new milestone: MRC is now present in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., Guam, Palau, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. MRC continues to expand its strength and reach as local, state and national officials and response partners recognize the program and its large pool of volunteers as an asset beyond measure.

### Bird Flu Casts Shadow over Flies

On August 30, the Associated Press reported many fisherman are concerned that feathers used for fly-tying may contain the avian influenza virus. Chicken hackle is used in the flies that fisherman tie for fishing. Many fly-tying companies import their feathers from Asian countries, which is considerably less expensive than other alternatives.

### Partnership for Public Services Government after Katrina

Partnership for Public Service (PPS) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that works to revitalize the federal government by inspiring a new generation to serve and by transforming the way government works. PPS sponsored a press briefing with Comptroller General David Walker on September 6 to announce the release of the Government Accountability Office's (GAO's) summary report of his Hurricane Katrina work to date, including new recommendations to improve government disaster preparedness and response. GAO will also release new findings on the status of levee repairs in New Orleans and the tracking of federal Katrina relief funding.



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